


INFORMATION
AND
OPINIONS
RELATING TO
PROPOSED
CIVIC CENTRE
VANCOUVER, B.C.

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I N F O R M A T I O N a n d O P I N I O N S
RELATING TO THE PROPOSED CIVIC CENTRE SITE.

VANCOUVER, B. C.

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Letter of transmissal dated 22nd October, 1926.

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CITY OF VANCOUVER



TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION

309 LONDON BUILDING

VANCOUVER, B.C.

CANADA

22nd October, 1926.

Harland Bartholomew & Associates,
317 North Eleventh Street,
Saint Louis, Missouri.

Dear Mr. Mills:

Re: Sites for Civic Centre.

Pursuant to your instructions I am transmitting herewith maps and other material that may be of value to you in deciding on a desirable site for the Civic Centre. There is a desire on the part of some of the City Council to have a By-Law put before the people at the next election, which I understand, will be on December 8th, 1926. A copy of the proposed By-Law must be published a month before the election. As I understand it, a Money By-Law will be put before the rate payers for the purpose of authorizing the City to spend One Million Dollars in the purchase of the Civic Centre Site, referred to in this report as Site "A", and commonly known as "Central School Site."

If, after consideration, you decide that Site "A" is a desirable one, a wire to that effect will be sufficient to allow the Council to proceed with the printing and publishing of the proposed By-Law. Any report can follow at a later date.

The material has been collected all under one cover, both for convenience and because, of some of the material, there is only one copy and I would request that the booklet be sent back here, at your convenience, to be filed for future reference.

As you no doubt have observed on your visit here, the present City Hall is both inadequate and unprepossessing in appearance. Realizing this, on 8th January, 1914, the following By-Law was submitted to the electors; "Which one of the following properties do you favour as a site for the erection thereon of a City Hall?" (1) Present City Hall site on Main Street (2) north half of Central School grounds facing on Pender Street, between Cambie Street and Hamilton Street (referred to, in this report, as Site "A"). The vote was 3644 for the present City Hall site, and 4533 for Site "A", a majority of 889 for the latter. Apparently, as a result of this vote the matter of grouping buildings around the proposed City Hall was brought to the attention of the public. A Vancouver Civic Centre Committee was formed and the result of their work will be found in a report marked Exhibit 3 herewith.

As mentioned in a press report, "With the outbreak of war all thought of a Civic Centre in keeping with the City development was put away until a more opportune time."

Early in 1925 the project was revived and a Citizens' Committee was appointed, I understand by the Council, and comprised of all the well known city organizations. While not unanimous, this Citizens' Committee has reported in favour of Site "A".

As shown in Exhibit 6 herewith, Three sites were voted on November 7th, 1925, with results as shown thereon, Site "A" having the majority over the other two combined.

EXHIBIT 1.

There is shown on a map of Greater Vancouver the sites "A", "B" and "C" which were voted on November 7th, 1925. This map illustrates the relation of such proposed Civic Centres to the whole area that is to be planned. After the coming elections the matter of amalgamation of both Point Grey and South Vancouver, I understand, is to be voted on. The opinion has been expressed, and I give it to you for what it is worth, that any By-Law in regard to funds for the Civic Centre should be voted on only after the matter of amalgamation is settled one way or the other. This opinion is based on the consideration, that even though the amalgamation of these other municipalities with Vancouver will not change the location of the Civic Centre, the rate-payers in these areas should have an opportunity, if they are to become part of Vancouver, of voting on such an important matter. On the other hand the opinion is expressed that every little delay in deciding the matter is costing money, as property values are expected to quickly increase. Street Railway lines are shown.

EXHIBIT 2.

On the map of the City of Vancouver there is shown the location of business and commercial buildings as compiled by Major MacKenzie. Several proposed sites are shown. Those which were voted on recently are marked "A", "B" and "C" and are the only ones, I believe which need to be particularly considered. The site marked "Number 2", while at present on one edge of the business centre, is located very close to the peak of land values and will, as Mr. Mills points out, undoubtedly be surrounded by business in the future. The site marked "C", which belonged to the City, is not now available, as some

industries are now located in the area. It has been proposed that a site west of Main Street, a desirable site is available facing the Canadian National Railway Depot. It is noted that Mr. Walter took up the question of the site with the City Engineer and the City Engineer will require considerable filling.

Site "B" received a vote of 10-7 on November 7th, 1925, and I believe, an adjoining site west of Main Street would get about the same support, although it has the added advantage of giving a chance for better treatment for a site which faces railway stations.

Site "B" is probably the most desirable other than those in the downtown area. It is rather strongly urged by one or two of the Aldermen, but as Mr. Mills has observed it is considerable distance from the business centre.

EXHIBIT 3.

In the opinion of the 1914-15 Vancouver Civic Centre Committee, apparently only Site "A" was considered. On Page 6 of this report, Mr. Thomas Adams in his assessment on various plans submitted approved of the suggestion to reserve the old Court House site as open space. This has been done and is now known as Victory Square and at the northern end thereof, there has been erected a Cenotaph. On page 6 of the report Mr. Adams also states and gives some reasons for his statement that "While it is no part of my duty to express approval or otherwise of the site chosen for the Civic Centre, I should like to say that it seems to me to be a satisfactory selection."

EXHIBIT 4. Note that newspaper offices adjoin Site "A",

EXHIBIT 5. It might be noted that those expressing opinions in regard to site "A" include several members of the Town Planning Commission, Mr. Newton J. Herr,

a member of the Joint Area Town Planning Commission, Messrs. J. E. Bland, W. A. Clark and J. H. Sharp who are members of the Joint Area Town Planning Commission, Mr. W. C. Shelly, ex-officio member of the Town Planning Commission who is generally represented at the meetings of the Commission by Mr. Jonathan Rogers, who with Mr. Shelly is a member of the Park Board.

EXHIBIT 6.

Probably no particular comment is needed on this Exhibit, except as already noted that site "B" received by a small vote and that site "C" is not now available.

EXHIBIT 7.

I feel that Mr. Bland has gone to considerable trouble to present his views in this regard and they represent, I believe, the views of a great majority who have taken any interest in this matter.

GENERAL

Mr. Mills will no doubt recall that Mr. Sharp of the Town Planning Commission favours the acquiring of two blocks to the south of the proposed site "A" and having buildings on both sides of Georgia Street. This would probably be a more expensive scheme and is not contemplated. Mr. Walker our Secretary, suggested another modification that the front of all blocks facing the proposed site should be acquired

and subsequently be sold. The object being that the city would get the benefit of the rise in values and would have greater control over the type of buildings to be erected.

Trusting that the information gathered in the short time at my disposal will be sufficient for your purpose at this time.

Yours very truly,

Horace L. Seymour

HLS:C

Horace L. Seymour.

INDEXED GUIDE MAP OF GREATER VANCOUVER

AND DISTRICT

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